# COLLEGE STATION

## *Streetscape*


















*Newman, Jackson Bieberstein, Inc.*

# *CITY OF COLLEGE STATION*

## *Streetscape Study*

***December 1992***

*Newman, Jackson, Bieberstein, Inc.*
*Dallas, Texas*

# CITY OF COLLEGE STATION
# STREETSCAPE STUDY

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## Purpose of Study

In 1989 the College Station City Council approved a revised plan for future land use within the city. With this came a realization that specific issues of community appearance could best be addressed by developing and adopting a comprehensive streetscape program for the city that would provide guidelines for both public and private development within thoroughfare corridors. In March of 1991 the plan was authorized which, when adopted, will work in concert with the city's Zoning Ordinance to give specific direction to land owners, developers, and the city itself in enhancing development within and along the major public corridors.

## General Study Area

While this plan is drafted for the city as a whole, certain target areas were identified to "test" the guidelines as well as to provide pilot projects that could be implemented in the near future. The overall strategy of these pilot projects is to provide several early examples of the benefits of the streetscape program and to promote these benefits to the local development community, landowners, and community leaders. The pilot projects are:

- **The Northgate Area** including a pedestrian mall project in the commercial area between the 300 and 400 blocks of University Drive and aesthetic improvements in neighboring residential areas through streetscape enhancement.

- **The Eastgate Area** at the intersection of Texas Avenue and Walton Drive. This streetscape plan should include working drawings, ready for physical implementation, specifying plantings, hardware, setbacks, and appropriate dimensions, etc.

- **The City Entry** location generally west of the University Drive/East Bypass intersection.

- **Texas Avenue from University Drive south to Dominik Drive.** This segment of roadway is scheduled for major improvements by SDHPT. Any design plan for this area should include bike paths.

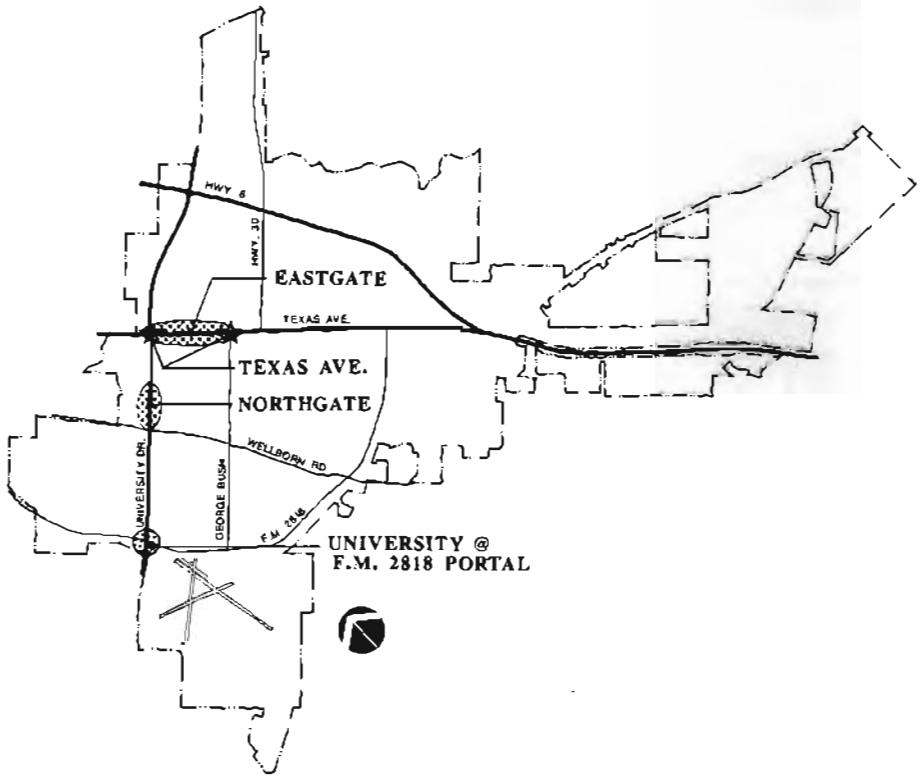



**Figure One**
**General Study Area**

## City Development Evolution and Trends

College Station has evolved over the years from being a town that existed because of a local university to a small thriving city with a solid, albeit small, retail, commercial, and industrial base.

The period from 1980-1990 saw strong overall growth occur to the south along the Texas Ave./ Highway 6 corridor primarily because of undesirable constraints to the east and west sides of the city and the existence of support infrastructures to the south. Land use changes as a result of that growth are depicted on Table One.

According to a study conducted by the city planning staff, the areas of greatest commercial growth occurred along the north side of University Drive and in the area bounded by Texas Avenue, Highway 30, the extension of F.M. 2818, and the East By-Pass. growth in these areas consisted mostly of office and retail operations. A second area of strong retail commercial growth occurred in the area bounded by Texas Ave, Rio Grande, F.M. 2818, and Deacon Drive.

Development is expected to continue southward as the city grows to its year 2000 population estimate of 71,000. Commercial development concentrations are planned for the Texas Avenue/Rock Prairie Road interchange with long range projections calling for additional commercial concentrations at the Texas Ave./Greens Prairie Road interchange.

With these emerging development patterns it is important that a streetscape plan be developed and adopted to ensure that future development occurs in a manner that enhances the appearance of the community.

TABLE ONE

CHANGES IN LAND USE TYPES - 1982 TO 1989

| Land Use Category | Inventory in Acres 1982 | 1989 | Change (Acres) | % Change 1982-89 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Right-of-Way | 1435.19 | 1600.54 | 165.35 | 11.5 |
| Railroads | 26.75 | 26.75 | 0.00 | 0.0 |
| Public | 169.74 | 441.85 | 272.11 | 160.3 |
| Parks | 268.06 | 899.05 | 630.99 | 235.4 |
| Vacant | 6211.65 | 7914.33 | 1702.68 | 27.4 |
| Multi-family | 486.07 | 566.60 | 80.56 | 16.6 |
| Single-family | 1671.66 | 1974.99 | 303.33 | 18.2 |
| Commercial | 384.55 | 609.99 | 225.44 | 58.6 |
| Industrial | 462.53* | 462.53* | 0.00 | 0.0 |
| Texas A&M | 3211.14 | 3211.14 | 0.00 | 0.0 |
| Other | 85.52 | 129.88 | 44.36 | 51.9 |
| TOTAL | 14,473.74 | 17,737.65 | 2,793.83 | 19.3% |

## Goals and Objectives

Two general **goals** were developed by the Streetscape Committee to articulate the project ideals and direction:

- Improve community appearance and project a quality image and character of College Station.

- Improve the aesthetic quality and bring unity and identity to city thoroughfares.

In order to present measurable responses to the above goals, the following **objectives** were developed by the Streetscape Committee:

- Create identity and continuity through landscape/aesthetic improvements adjacent to thoroughfares.

- Create a community identity

and a "sense of arrival" via City entry signs and landscaping entry points.

- Develop conceptual designs for paving, landscaping, corner treatment, and street hardware for major and secondary intersections.

- Develop streetscape designs that are low maintenance, simple and not overpowering, that provide identity to create a quality image, and that provide unity and consistency that will link the various projects throughout the City.

- Develop streetscape design concepts and associated landscape and street hardware standards that are unique to College Station and that are practical and implementable.

- Develop standards for unified signage, street lighting, street furniture, and traffic signals to incorporate into streetscape projects.

- Further develop and incorporate the existing sidewalk and bikeway plans into streetscape planning projects.

- Identify State and local roadway improvement projects where streetscape plans could be incorporated.

- Investigate all possibilities and area locations eligible for SDHPT's Landscape Cost Sharing Program.

- Review and recommend revisions to applicable portions of the City's subdivision and landscape ordinances as well as other development policies.

- Develop a streetscape plan for the east side of the University/Walton Drive intersection (Eastgate) as a pilot project in accordance with recommended plan guidelines and standards.

# *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

- ***EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES***

  ***SOILS***
  ***VEGETATION***
  ***FLOODPLAINS***

- ***MANMADE INFLUENCES***

  ***LANDUSE DEVELOPMENT AREAS***
  ***UTILITIES***
  ***DRAINAGEWAYS AND CULVERTS***
  ***THOROUGHFARE RIGHTS-OF-WAY***
  ***VIEWS/IMAGE ANALYSIS***
  ***EXISTING BIKE PLAN***

- ***OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS***

# *EXISTING NATURAL RESOURCES*

Various factors, some natural, others manmade, will influence and give form to a successful streetscape program. This section will identify and document those factors.

## Soils

The various soil groupings found in College Station are depicted on **Exhibit One** and are taken from the U.S. Soil Conservation Service survey. While there are a variety of soils spread over the area there are common characteristics which are evident. Most of the soils are clayey low productive soils with low natural fertility suitable mostly for pasture-land unless amended appropriately for landscape development. These are primarily the Crockett, Edge, Lufkin, and Tabor series. Drainage characteristics of these soils vary but are predominately poor drained, fine grained, and possess low permeability. The most fertile soils are found along floodplains and creeks, as well as beyond the city limits in the bottomland of the Navasota and Brazos Rivers. These fertile soils are primarily the Axtell, Gowen, and Ochlockonee, and are present within the city limits along Carter's, Wolf Pen, White, and Lick Creeks. The various soils located within the College Station City limits can be found in the Appendix.

To accommodate landscape development that may be required by a streetscape plan, soil amendments and drainage provisions should be made to assure long term ornamental plant health.

## Vegetation

The extent of existing vegetation should play a large role in determining overall streetscape concepts especially regarding setbacks and landscape reserves. A well conceived plan will utilize existing vegetation by encouraging mechanisms for preservation and incorporation into any proposed development.

This does not appear to have been the case for the most part in previous development around the city. Most commercially developed areas have given little thought to preservation of existing vegetation. The largest masses of natural vegetation occur along Carter's and Wolf Pen Creeks as well as in undeveloped tracts along FM 2818 and University Drive. The present tree cover is shown on **Exhibit Two**. Within all of the areas are outstanding examples of hardwoods and typical understory growth.

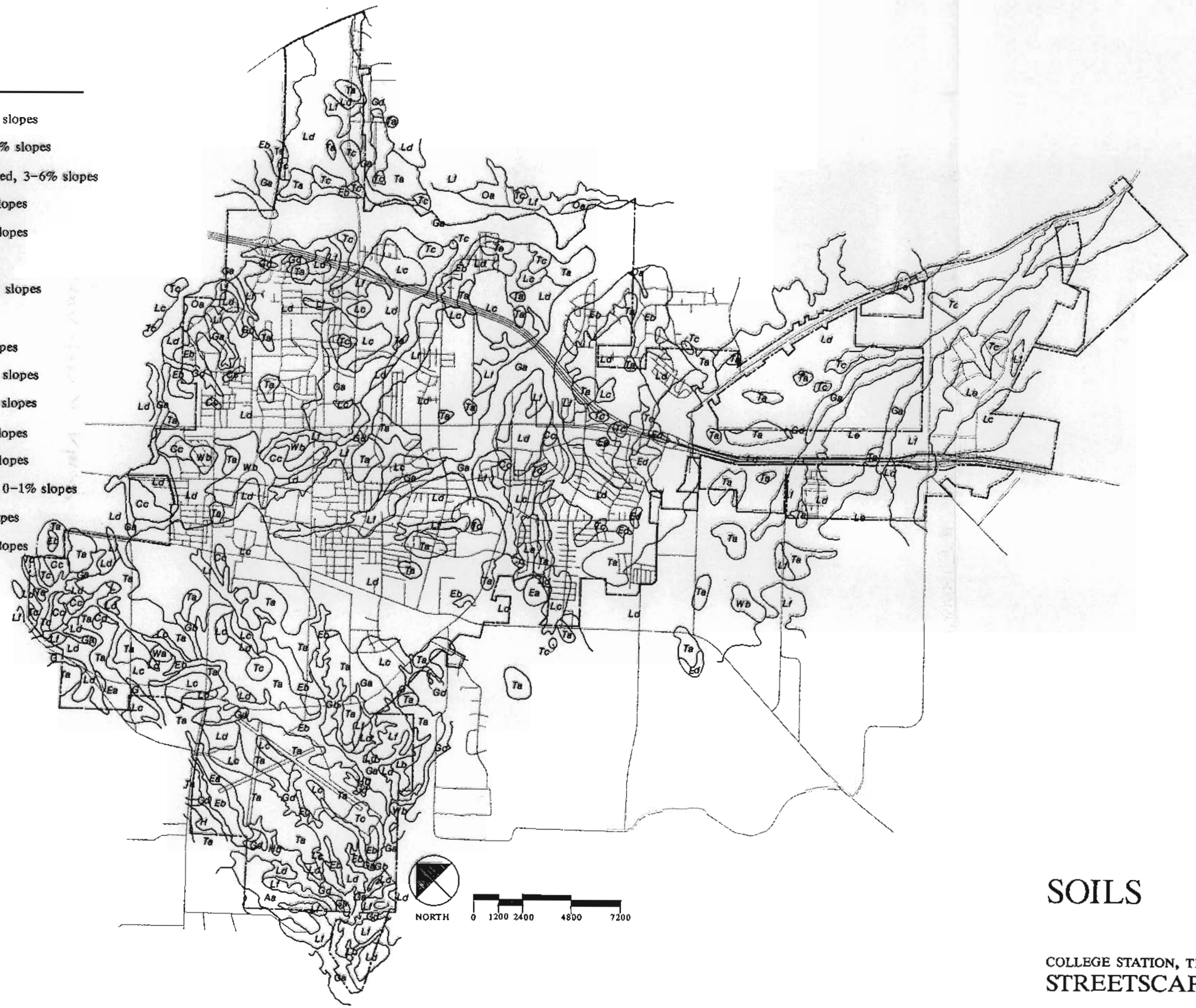
With the exception of Texas A&M, few developments have done any planting in the public rights-of-way. Tree cover, therefore, along these thoroughfares is quite sparse and uncoordinated.

## Floodplains

Major 100 year floodplains are depicted by **Exhibit Three**. These are the floodplains associated with Carter's Creek, Wolf Pen Creek, White Creek, Lick Creek, Alum Creek, Spring Creek, Bee Creek, and Peach Creek. These drainageways traverse the city and provide natural greenways except at those areas that have been altered by roadway crossings or channelization. Many of the floodplain areas are to be conserved as parkland as proposed by the long range city land use plan. This will provide fingers of green throughout most of the city's existing and developing residential areas.

## LEGEND

- Aa Axtell fine sandy loam, 1–3% slopes
- Cc Crockett fine sandy loam, 1–3% slopes
- Cd Crockett fine sandy loam, eroded, 3–6% slopes
- Ea Edge fine sandy loam, 1–3% slopes
- Eb Edge fine sandy loam, 3–8% slopes
- Ga Gowen clay loam, 1–3% slopes
- Gb Gowen fine sandy loam, 3–8% slopes
- Gd Gullied land
- Hb Houston–Hunt clays, 3–6% slopes
- Lc Lufkin fine sandy loam, 0–1% slopes
- Ld Lufkin fine sandy loam, 1–3% slopes
- Le Lufkin–Edge complex, 1–3% slopes
- Lf Lufkin–Edge complex, 3–8% slopes
- Oa Ochlockonee fine sandy loam, 0–1% slopes
- Ta Tabor fine sand loam, 1–3% slopes
- Tc Tabor loamy fine sandy, 1–3% slopes
- Wb Wilson clay loam, 1–3% slopes




# SOILS

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

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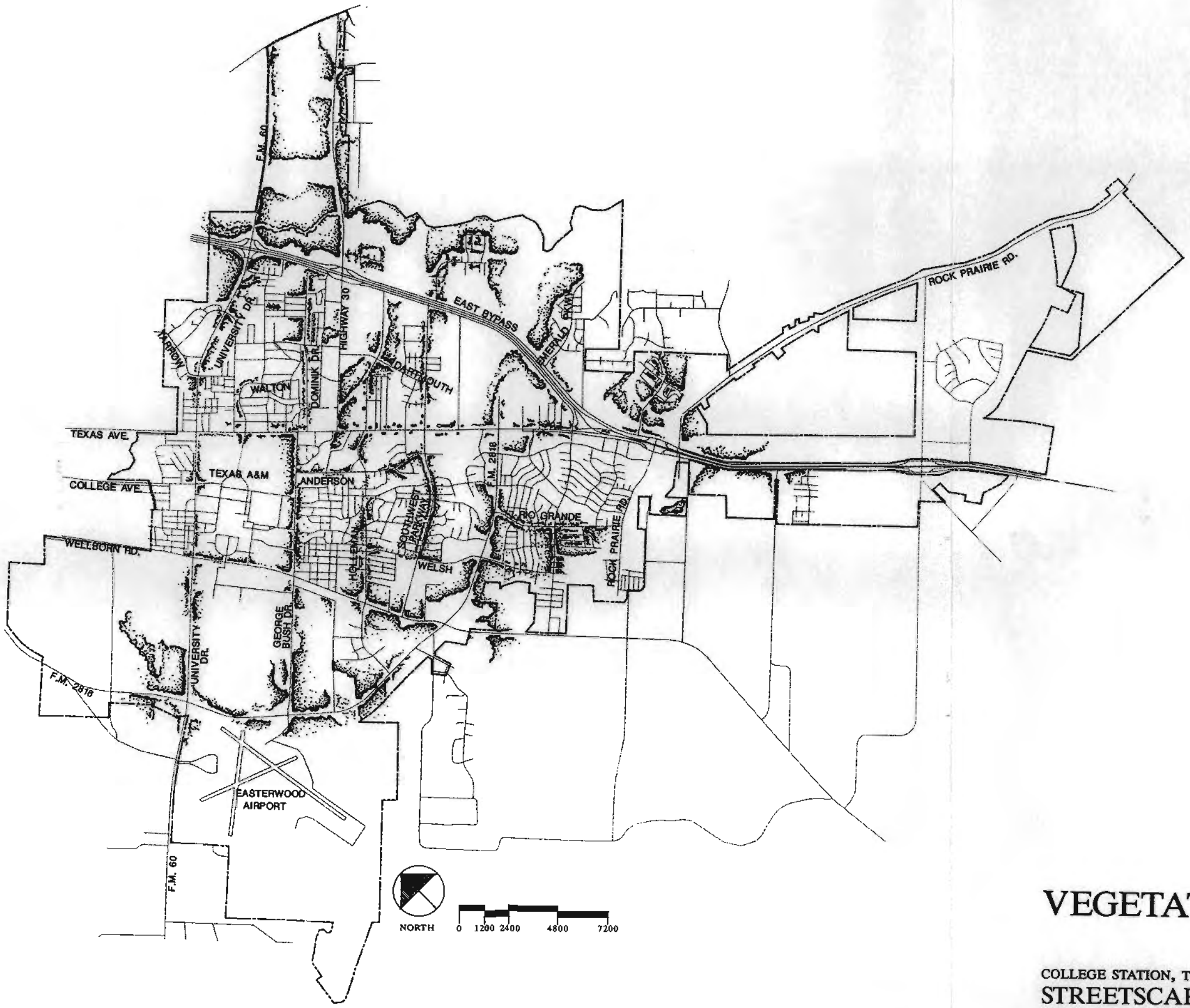


# VEGETATION

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

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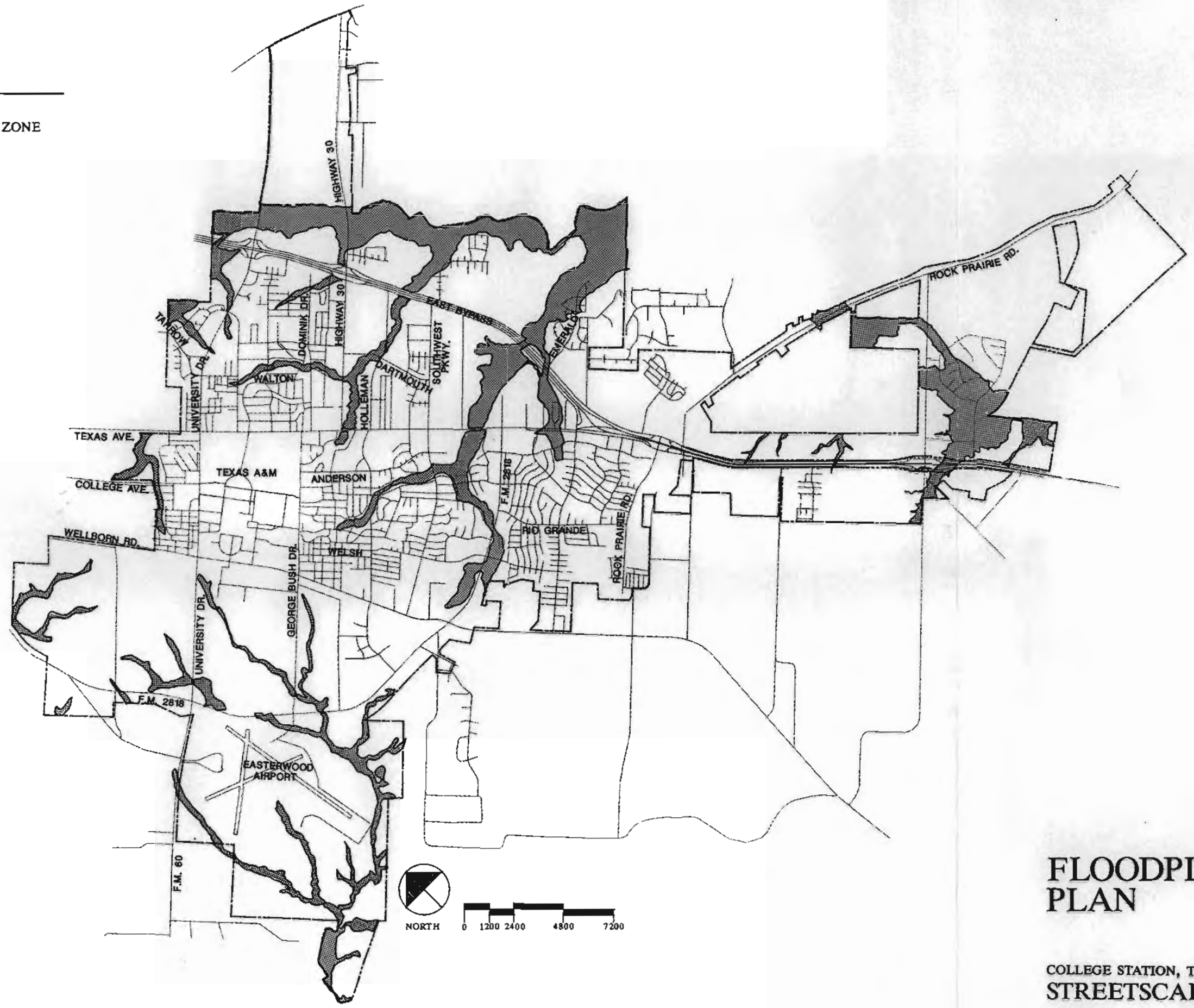
LEGEND

100 YR. FLOOD ZONE




# FLOODPLAIN PLAN

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

NEWMAN JACKSON BIEBERSTEIN, INC.

# *MAN MADE INFLUENCES*

**Land Use/**
**Development Areas**

Future land use is shown on **Exhibit Four**. This is a reproduction of the updated comprehensive plan 2000 and provides direction and guidance for city growth. This plan recognizes that most growth will continue to occur to the south because of natural development constraints to the east and west. It calls for retail, commercial, and higher density residential uses along the major access routes into the city, which the streetscape plan will address. There is currently proposed an industrial district east of the East By-Pass at the University drive interchange in floodplain area of Carter's Creek. This particular site should be developed with great care as it is adjacent to a major portal of the city and contains large stands of existing vegetation.

**Utilities**

Locations of major utility lines (i.e. water, sanitary sewer, gas, storm sewer, telephone, and underground and overhead power lines) are indicated on **Exhibits Five, Six, and Seven**. Locations of these utilities will effect tree plantings within the R.O.W. Thoroughfares affected the most are Texas Avenue, University Drive, Highway 30, Holleman Drive, and Southwest Parkway.

**Drainageways and Culverts**

Open drainageways exist along at least one side of major thoroughfares in most all locations of the city. The major State highways (i.e. Texas Ave., University Dr., F.M. 2818, Harvey Rd.) handle drainage in an open drainageway in a majority of instances. These drainageways have poorly maintained side slopes and, in most areas, prove difficult to maintain for both the State and adjacent property owners, resulting in unsightly conditions along highly traveled and important visual corridors.

**Thoroughfare**
**Rights-of-Way**

The ability to conceive and carry out a successful streetscape scheme depends largely on the amount of right-of-way within which one has to work. This also determines the degree of public/private participation that the plan will recommend. **Exhibit Eight** indicates available planting space between the roadway and right of way on major city thoroughfares. This information combined with visual verification indicate very tight areas along the major corridors into College Station especially Texas Ave., Highway 30, and portions of University Drive. These areas will require cooperative strategies with existing property owners to achieve a balanced well coordinated plan.

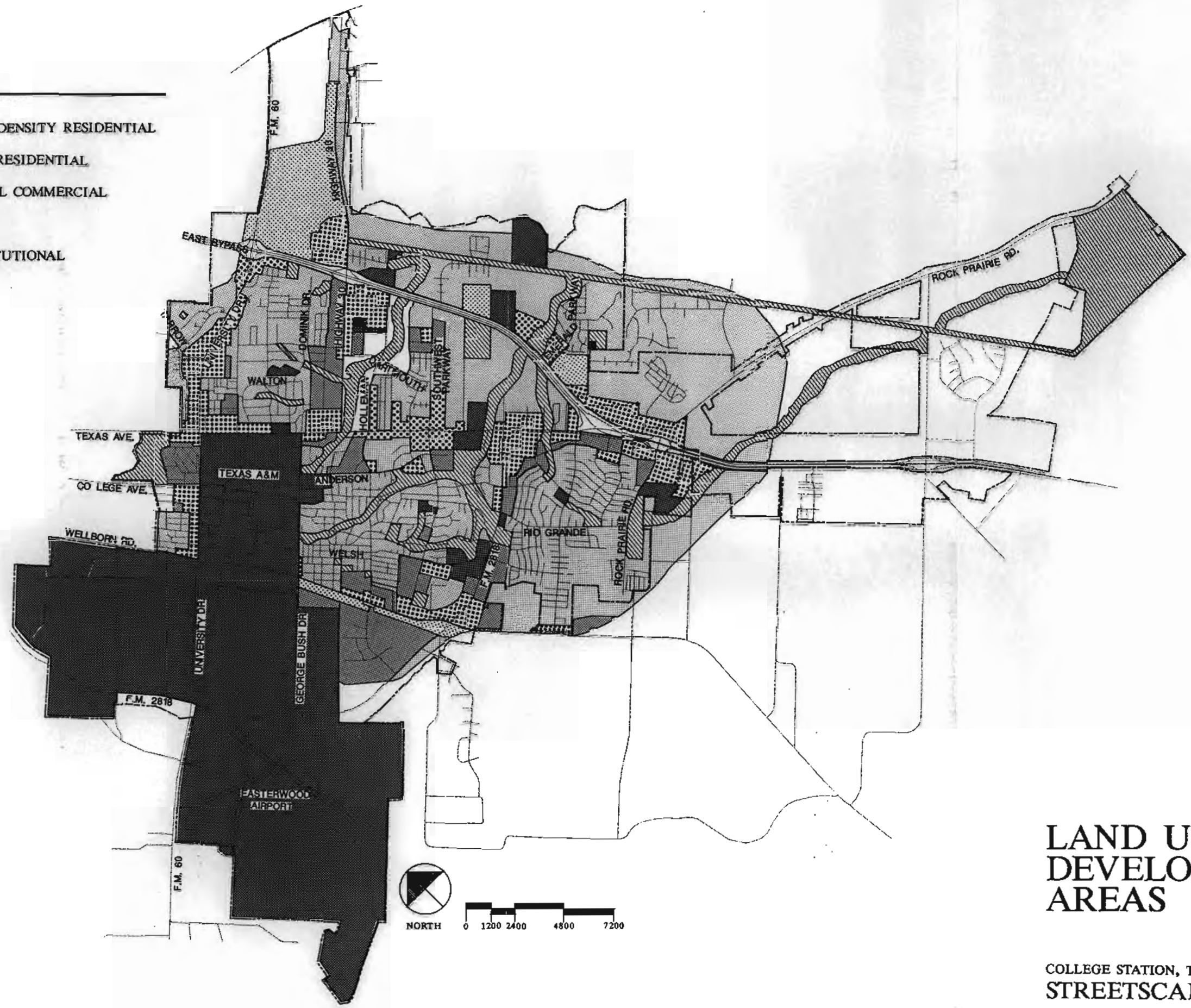
**Signage**

Signage as an element of the streetscape (building signage excluded) was reviewed in light of the current City sign regulations. The regulations adopted by Council set up a reasonable system of controls which keeps the City free from adverse effects of unregulated signage. No major abuses or violations of the ordinance were noted during site analysis.

It was noted that certain major intersections are not signed and that there is an absence of major informational or directional signage to the University with the exception of the exit signage at the East By-Pass.

LEGEND

- LOW / MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- OFFICE / RETAIL COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC & INSTITUTIONAL
- PARKS




# LAND USE/ DEVELOPMENT AREAS

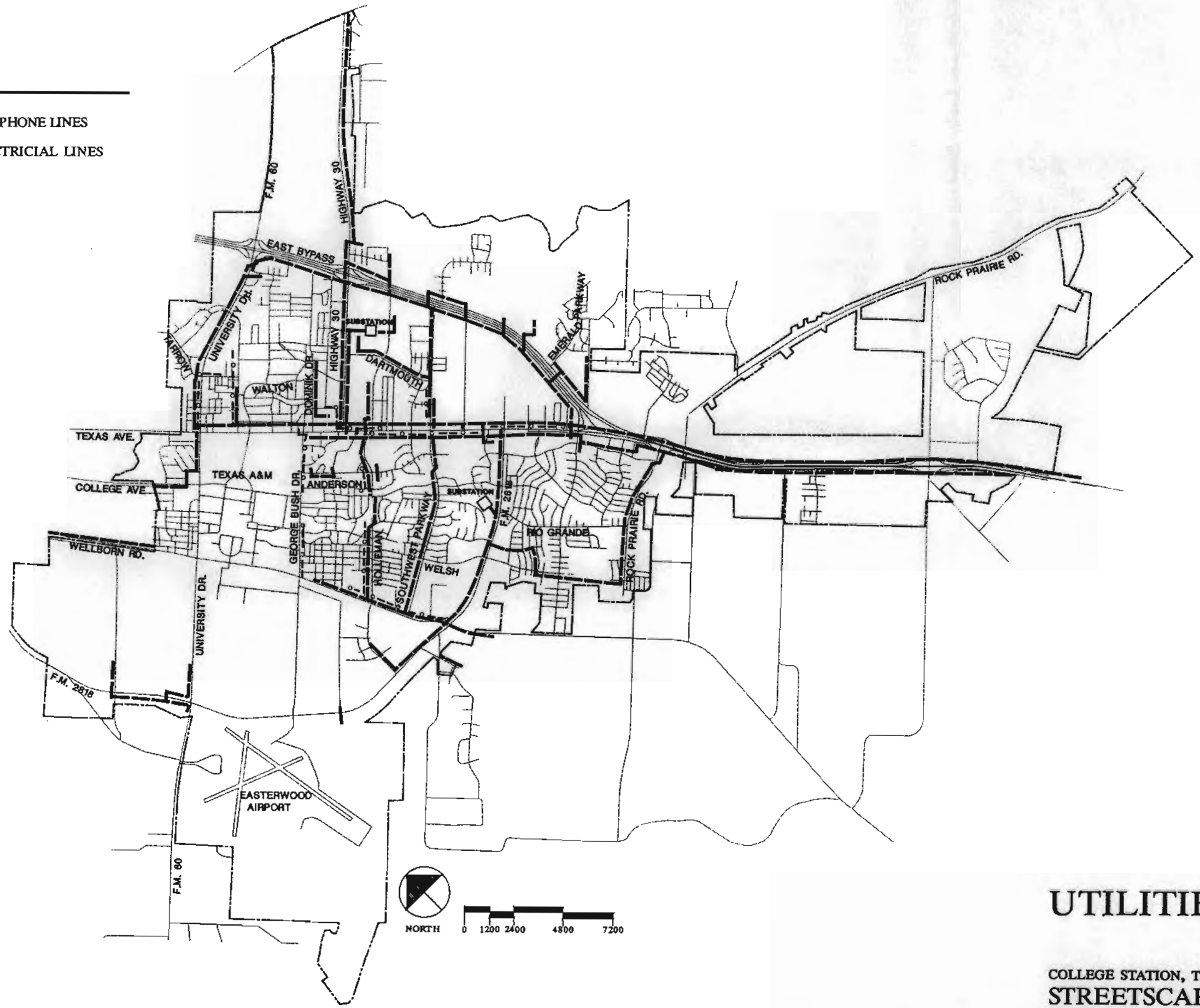
COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

NEWMAN JACKSON BIEBERSTEIN, INC.

LEGEND

---o OVERHEAD TELEPHONE LINES

— — OVERHEAD ELECTRICIAL LINES




# UTILITIES

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

STREETSCAPE PLAN

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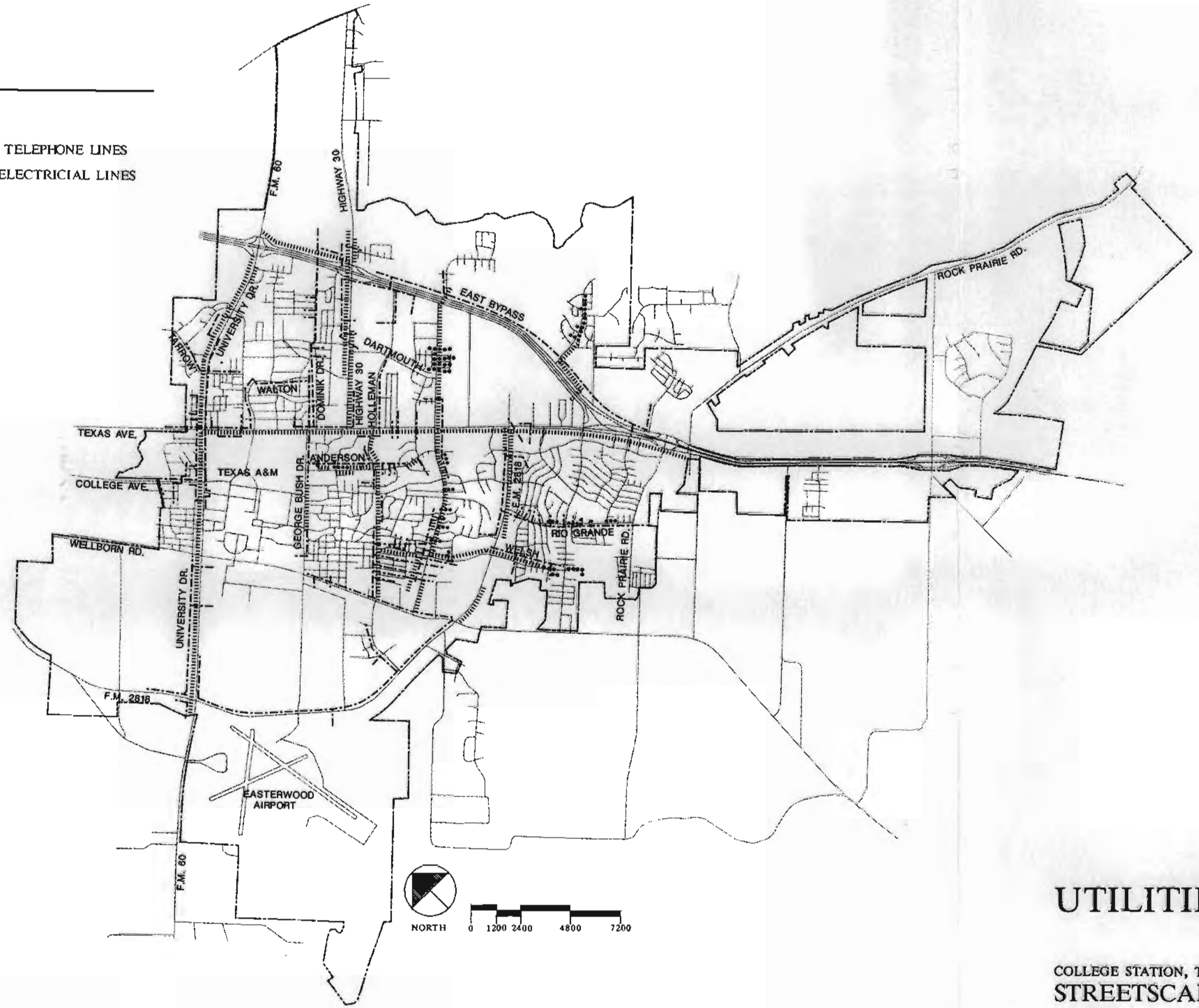
LEGEND

- GAS LINES
- UNDERGROUND TELEPHONE LINES
- UNDERGROUND ELECTRICIAL LINES




# UTILITIES

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

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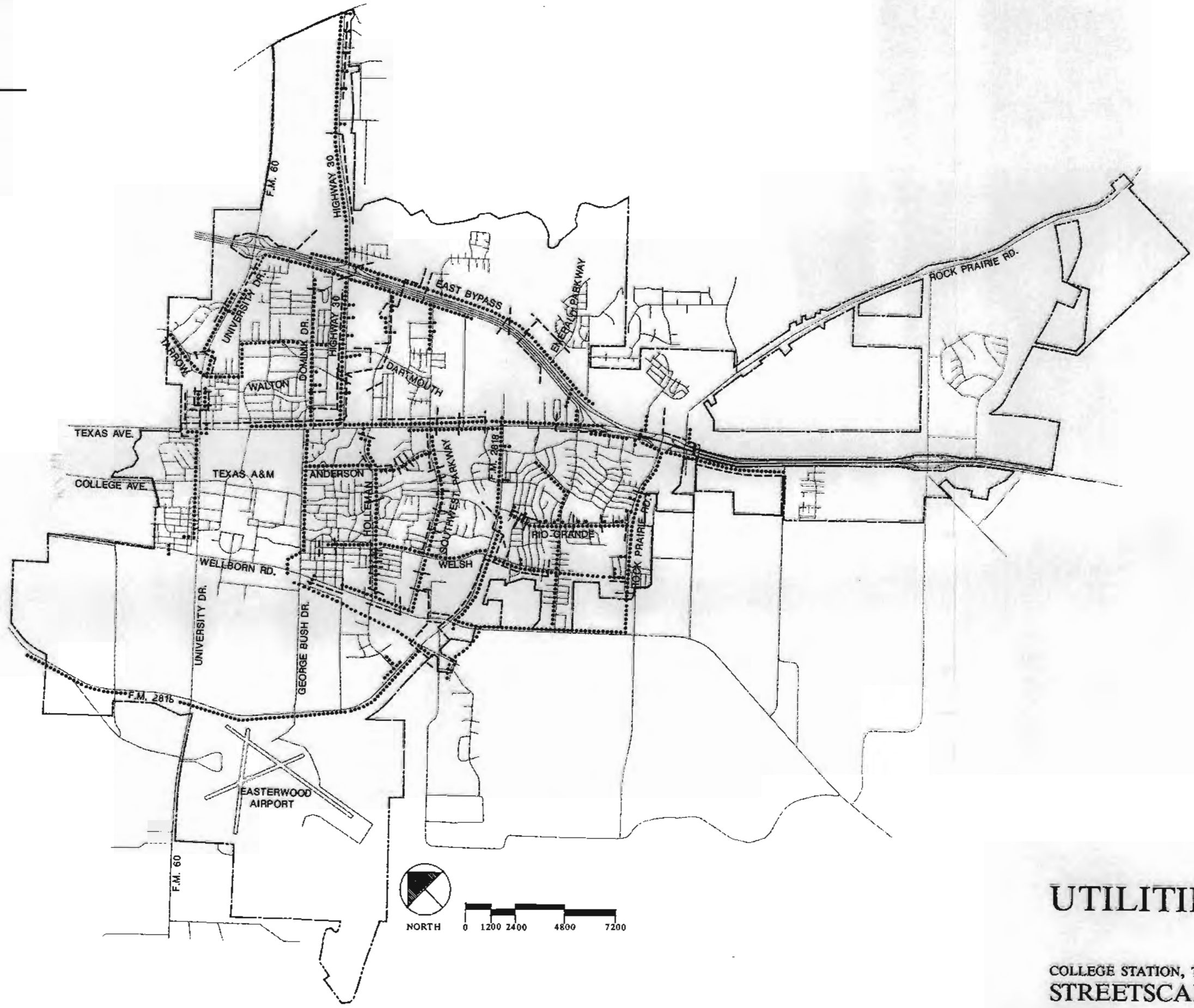
LEGEND

WATER LINES

SEWER LINES




# UTILITIES

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

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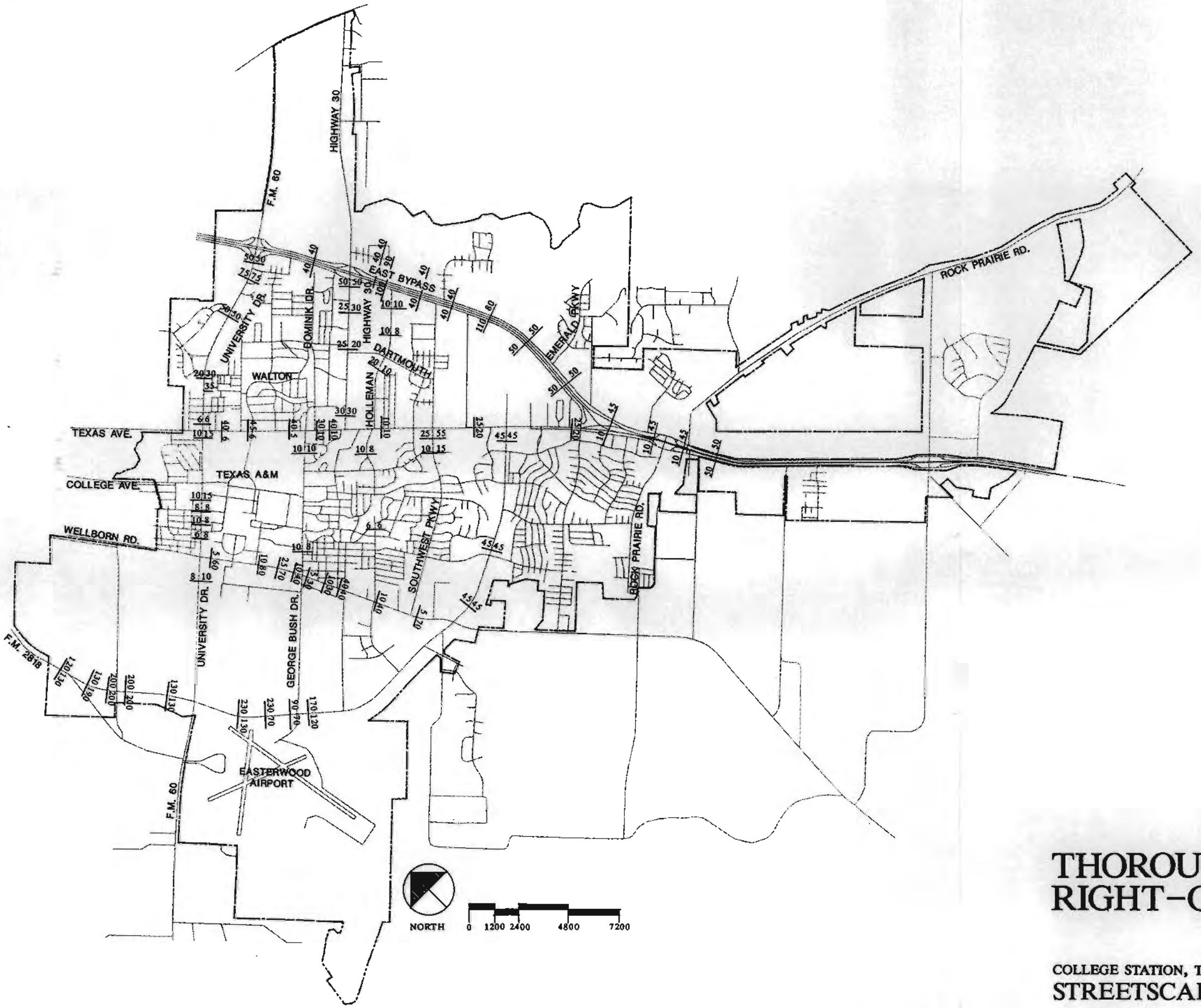


# THOROUGHFARE RIGHT-OF-WAYS

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

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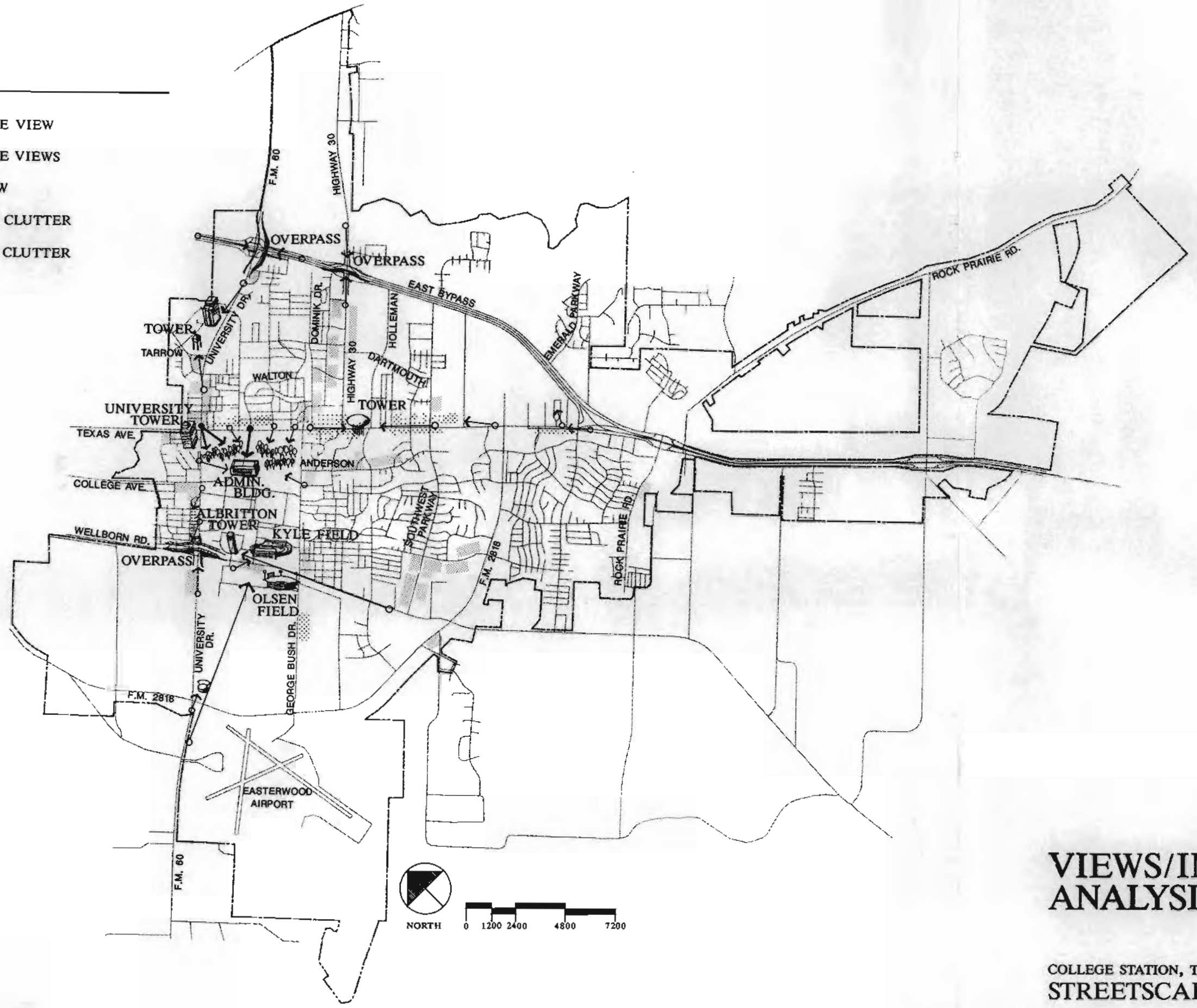
LEGEND

- MAJOR POSITIVE VIEW
- MINOR POSITIVE VIEWS
- NEGATIVE VIEW
- MAJOR VISUAL CLUTTER
- MINOR VISUAL CLUTTER
- LANDMARKS




# VIEWS/IMAGE ANALYSIS

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

NEWMAN JACKSON BIEBERSTEIN, INC.

## Views/Image Analysis

Views and image analysis is documented graphically on Exhibit Nine. Views and images will be analyzed by major thoroughfare as follows:

*Texas Avenue*

There are minor positive long views of the University at the Texas Avenue/Greens Prairie Road intersection and additional scattered positive views moving northward along Texas Avenue.

There are pockets of visual clutter along Texas at the retail-/commercial nodes especially in the vicinity of Southwest Parkway and between Highway 30 and George Bush Drive.

From the College Station City Hall northward to University Drive is a zone of major visual clutter of retail and commercial establishments with varying setbacks, unscreened parking, and little or no vegetation. The Eastgate retail areas contains several viable businesses, but the appearance of the area is unkept and run down. At such a prominent location across from the main entrance to the University, this area should be upgraded as soon as possible. The view down New Main westward from Texas Avenue conveys a very strong ceremonial feel to the approach into the University.

**Eastgate Commercial Area**

**View Westward Along New Main**

Continuing northbound on Texas, the views to the west toward the University continue to be very strong and are the most significant in the city.

Continuing northward on Texas Avenue past University to the city limit line, commercial development crowds the Texas Avenue R.O.W. with little or no landscape development or screening.

*East By-Pass*

Views along the East By-Pass are generally good because of the large amounts of existing vegetation. The Texas Avenue/East By-Pass interchange is a major visual focal element that should receive special consideration.

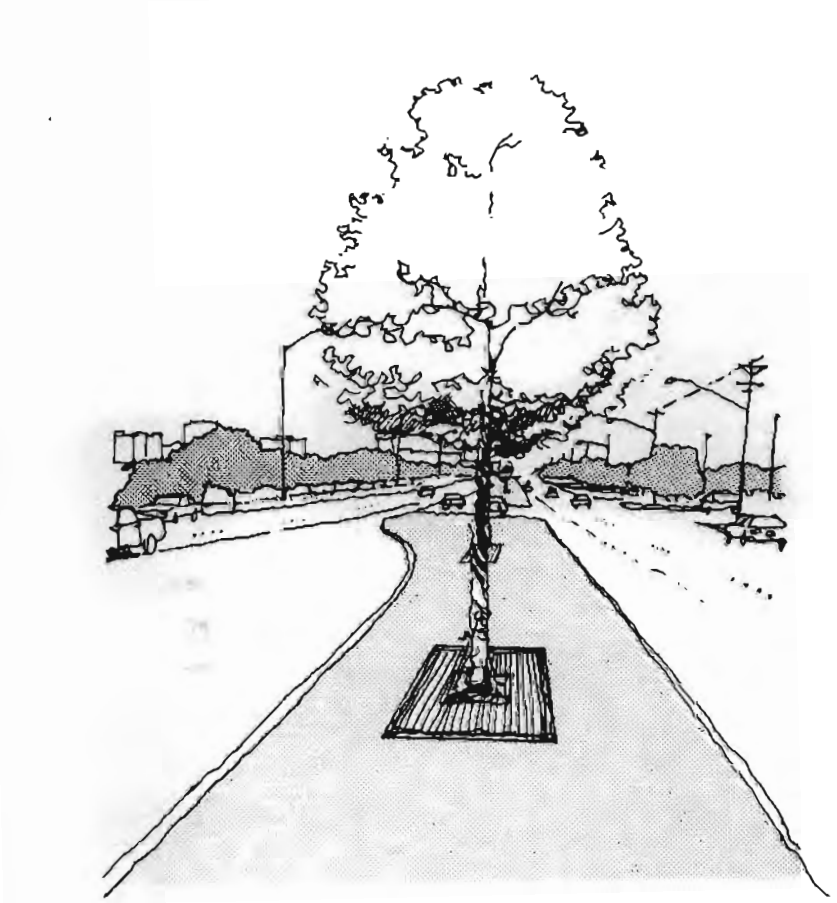
*Highway 30*

Exiting the East By-Pass and traveling along Highway 30 the drive-by image is one of minor clutter of various retail/commercial and multi-family developments. The undeveloped areas of the Wolf Pen Creek corridor provide a soft green image along the south side of Highway 30 between Texas Avenue and Dartmouth Street. Landscape development to existing businesses is more evident on the south of the highway than the north.

*University Drive*

Exiting and driving west from the East By-Pass the image is soft and green because of the existing hardwood grove. The straight-ahead view focuses on the monument tower at the Chimney Hill retail center. As the center is approached the masses of trees are replaced by parking areas all landscaped with mixed success. From Tarrow Street west to Texas Avenue there is retail/-commercial clutter on both sides of the highway. At the Texas Avenue intersection the panoramic view of the University in the distance is probably the strongest and most significant view in the entire city.

Continuing west along University Drive has recently been redeveloped with pavers and ornamental trees by the State Department of Highways to provide some visual relief to the six lanes of pavement. The intersection of University and South College has also been landscaped recently with pavers and small flowering trees but the size of the material utilized in both areas seems inappropriate for the space of the intersection and R.O.W.



**University Drive Median**

Continuing west, the north side of University becomes cluttered with small retail/commercial establishments. At Tauber Street the A&M Methodist Church provides a brief visual break but from Lodge westward to Wellborn Road the Northgate commercial area provides major visual clutter. University Drive has encroached upon these establishments to the point that sidewalks are too narrow for the volume of pedestrians that wish to use them. Parking along University has been reduced to parallel. Storefronts here have no consistency of style giving the entire area an undesirable appearance.

**Northgate Commercial Area**

Leaving the Northgate area the next major view is of the Wellborn Road interchange and continuing west from there the University controls land on both sides of the highway. The image in this area returns to a softer, greener feel with the exception of the Veterinary Medicine School Complex which has parking along the highway. The remainder of University Drive to FM 2818 passes through University land. The TAMU Research Park has developed a very positive image through appropriate plantings, portal elements and other streetscape related items.

**TAMU Research Park**

*FM 2818*

Traveling south along FM 2818 from Bryan, the University Drive interchange marks the entry into the College Station City Limits. Image here is rural because of the large amounts of undeveloped land. Therefore it will be important to convey a sense of arrival into the city through the use of portal development. As one continues southward along FM 2818 the image remains rural and pastoral because of the amount of undeveloped area. Between Wellborn Road and Texas Avenue development is sporadic with no significant image concerns or views.

*George Bush Drive*

Traveling west along George Bush Drive from Texas Avenue the views toward the north to the University are significant. This thoroughfare has probably the best image of all the streets in the city primarily because of the University to the north, the well established residential area to the south, and the median of existing oaks between Timber Street and Dexter Drive. West of Fairview the Southside retail area again brings visual clutter into the visual experience. Continuing westward, George Bush Drive enters University property and eventually terminates at Easterwood Airport.

**View Eastward Along George Bush Drive**

**Sidewalks and Bikeways**

The City of College Station is currently working toward the adoption of a bikeway and sidewalk plan. Because of the City's size, the location of the University, and other elements that make the area attractive for development of an extensive bikeway system, the City has put a priority on completing a bikeway system. Because of the close relationship of the sidewalk system to the bikeway system the existing conditions of both systems have been evaluated concurrently.

*Sidewalks*

Data collection revealed no uniformity to sidewalk locations, widths, setbacks, etc. A review of the City Subdivision Regulations found walks required on most streets but their location within the public R.O.W. was very flexible confirming the lack of uniformity observed. In a few instances walks exist about the City with "parkway strips" that are awkward and cause high maintenance in terms of trimming and edging. The city Subdivision Regulations state that sidewalks are optional along residential streets and many of the newer subdivisions reflect this, forcing residents to walk in the street. The four foot minimum sidewalk width as required by City regulations appears too narrow in most locations, especially in those few instances where the sidewalk abuts the curb.

*Bikeways*

The College Station area has a high amount of bicycle traffic and, as a result, the City has initiated a program to provide for an organized bikeway system. The current system is a combination of "bike lanes" where a portion of the street or shoulder is striped, signed, and marked for exclusive bicycle use, and "bike routes" where motorists and bike riders share the roadway. Few separate facilities for bicyclists exist. At present, bicycles are restricted from the high vehicular volume thoroughfares such as Texas Avenue, University Drive, FM 2818, and Highway 30. More use should be made of existing parks and future linear parks for development of bike path facilities.

**Sidewalk and Parkway Strip in Residential Area**

**Bike Route**

# *OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS*

The City of College Station is faced with very real constraints in achieving a streetscape plan but there are also some clear opportunities as well which should be understood and capitalized on. **Exhibits Ten and Eleven** illustrate potential areas for tree planting based on analysis of utilities and existing tree cover. **Exhibit 12** illustrates opportunities related to portals, thoroughfares, and intersections.

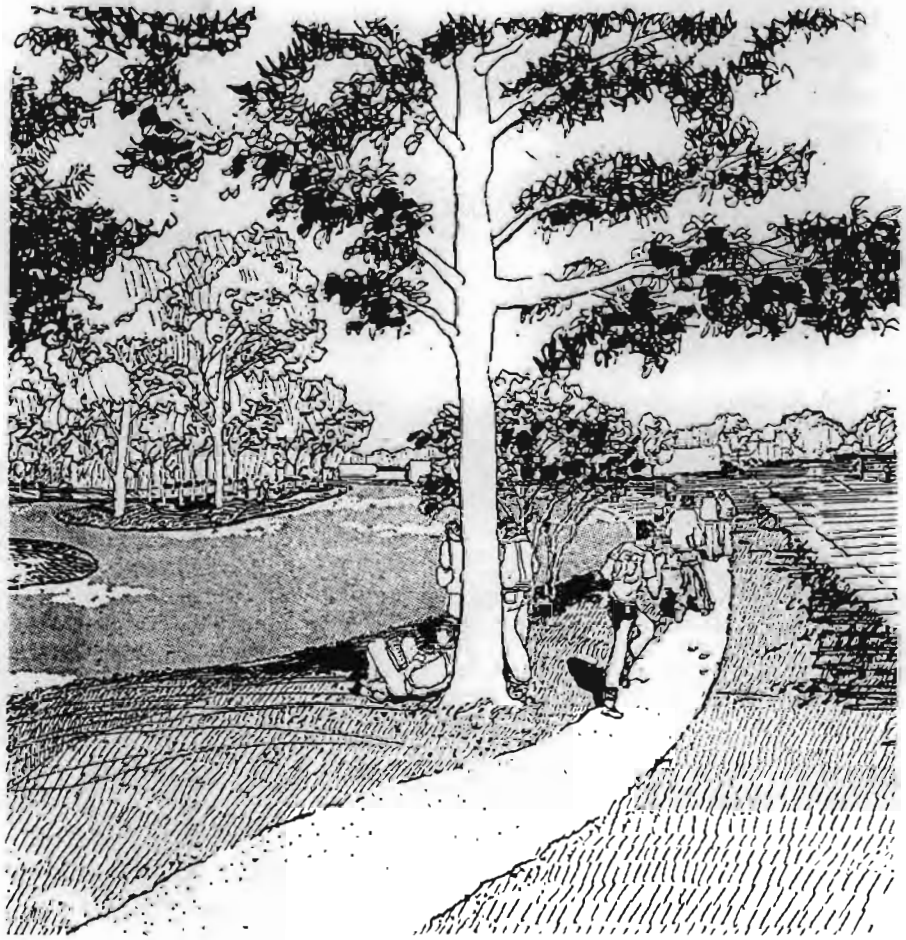
## Opportunities

The City is fortunate to have a great deal of undeveloped land within its boundaries thus giving it much needed flexibility and freedom to create a streetscape program that will show results as development occurs in the coming years.

The fact that the City has a landscape ordinance setting forth minimum landscape requirements for development provides an opportunity to insure a continued standard of visual quality in development. With a few well conceived modifications to the ordinance this aspect can be strengthened even further.

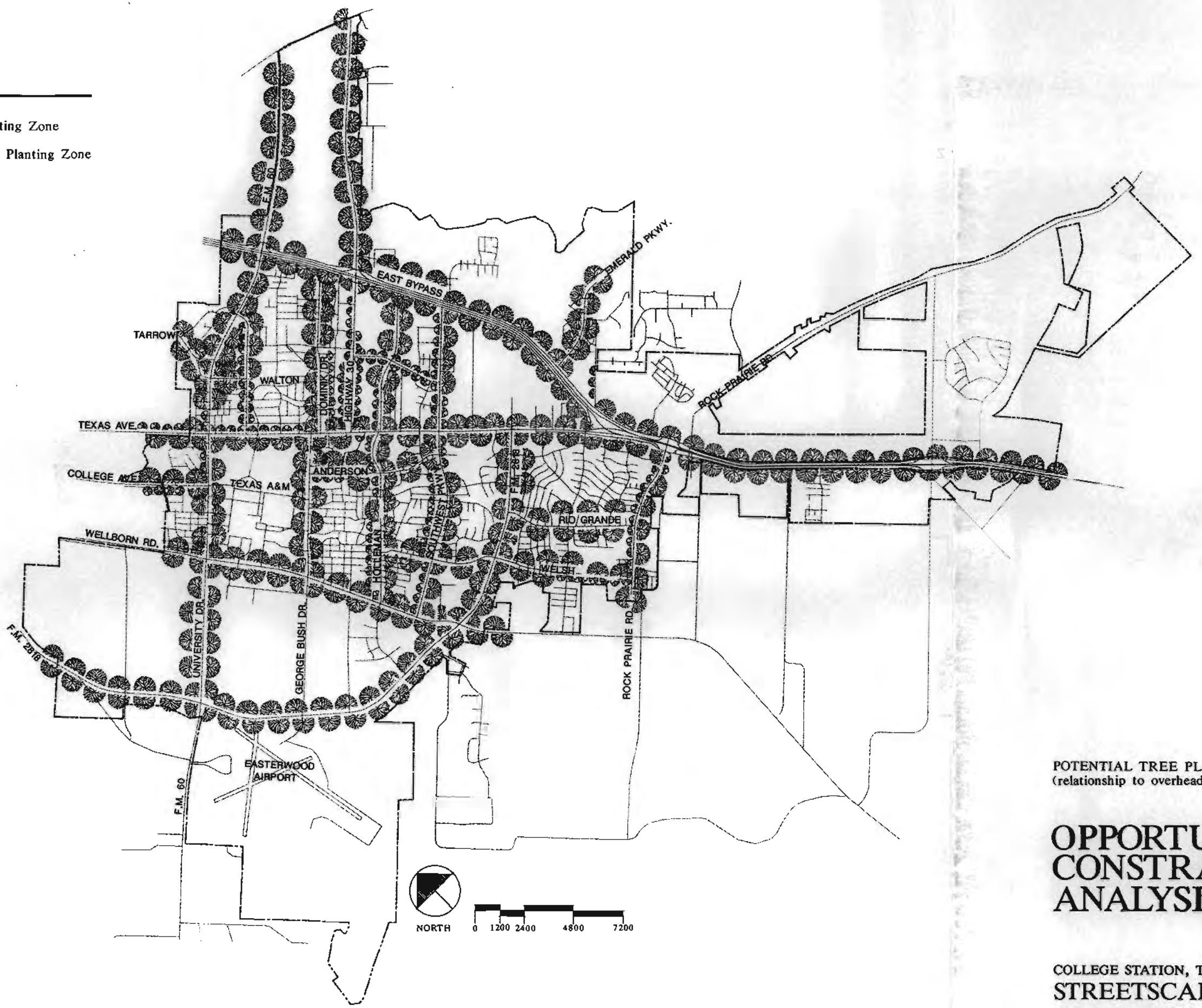
Primary approaches to the city on the major thoroughfares are uncomplicated and the various interchanges along the East By-Pass and at FM 60 and FM 2818 make logical choices for future portal development.

The overall visual image of College Station is good and conveys the notion that this is a friendly, safe, community in which to live and work. The streetscape plan can build on that strength to provide an even stronger sense of visual continuity. Texas A&M adds a very strong and positive image to the city that should be recognized and fostered. The existing Parks and Open Space System provides a strong green image to the city that will be enhanced even further as a proposed linear greenbelt system is implemented. The fact that Texas Avenue is to be widened along the length of the Texas A&M frontage presents an opportunity to incorporate streetscape design concepts into this project.



## LEGEND

- Shade Tree Planting Zone
- Ornamental Tree Planting Zone




POTENTIAL TREE PLANTING ZONES
(relationship to overhead utilities)

# OPPORTUNITIES/ CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

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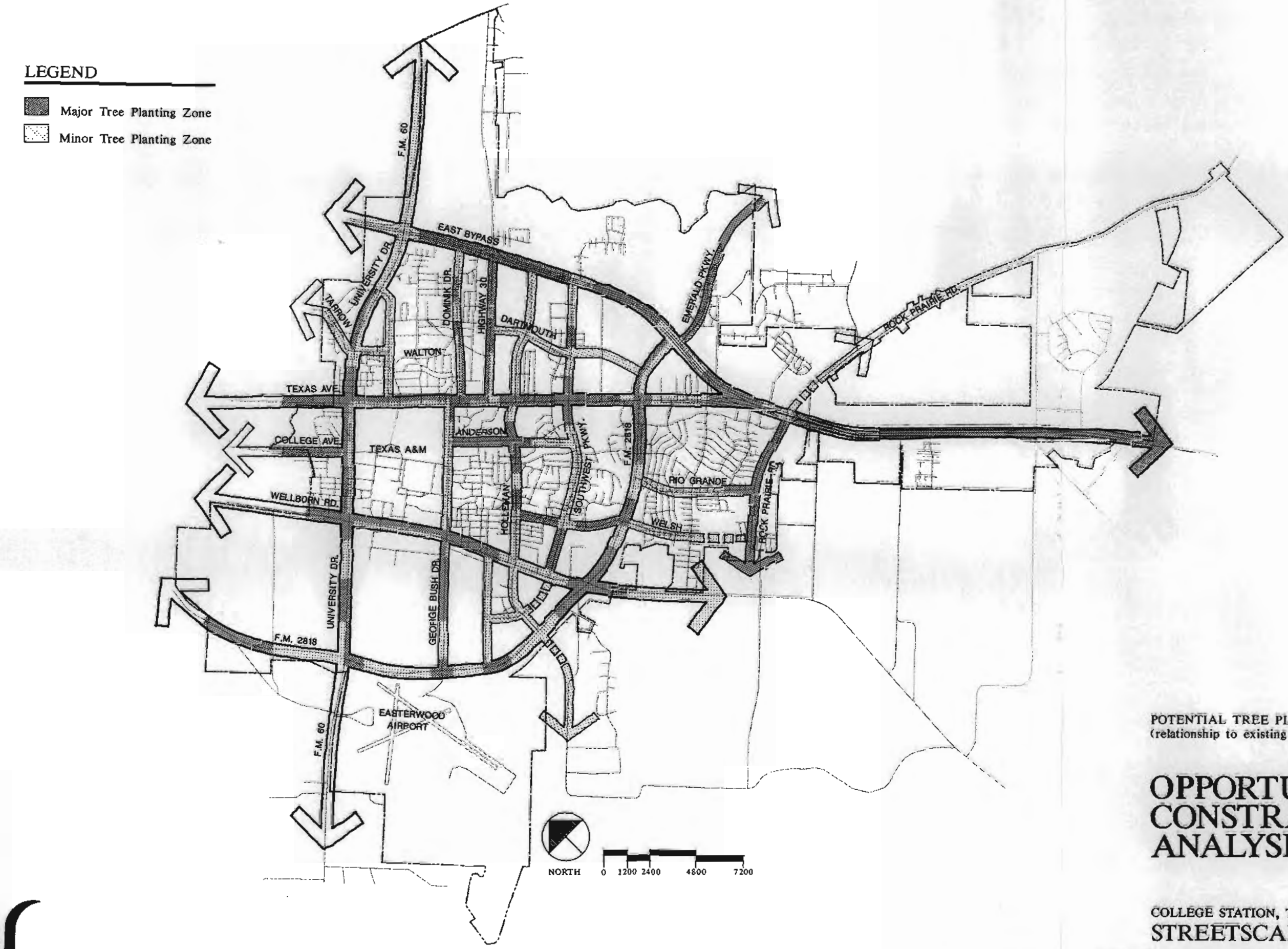


POTENTIAL TREE PLANTING ZONES
(relationship to existing vegetation)

# OPPORTUNITIES/ CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

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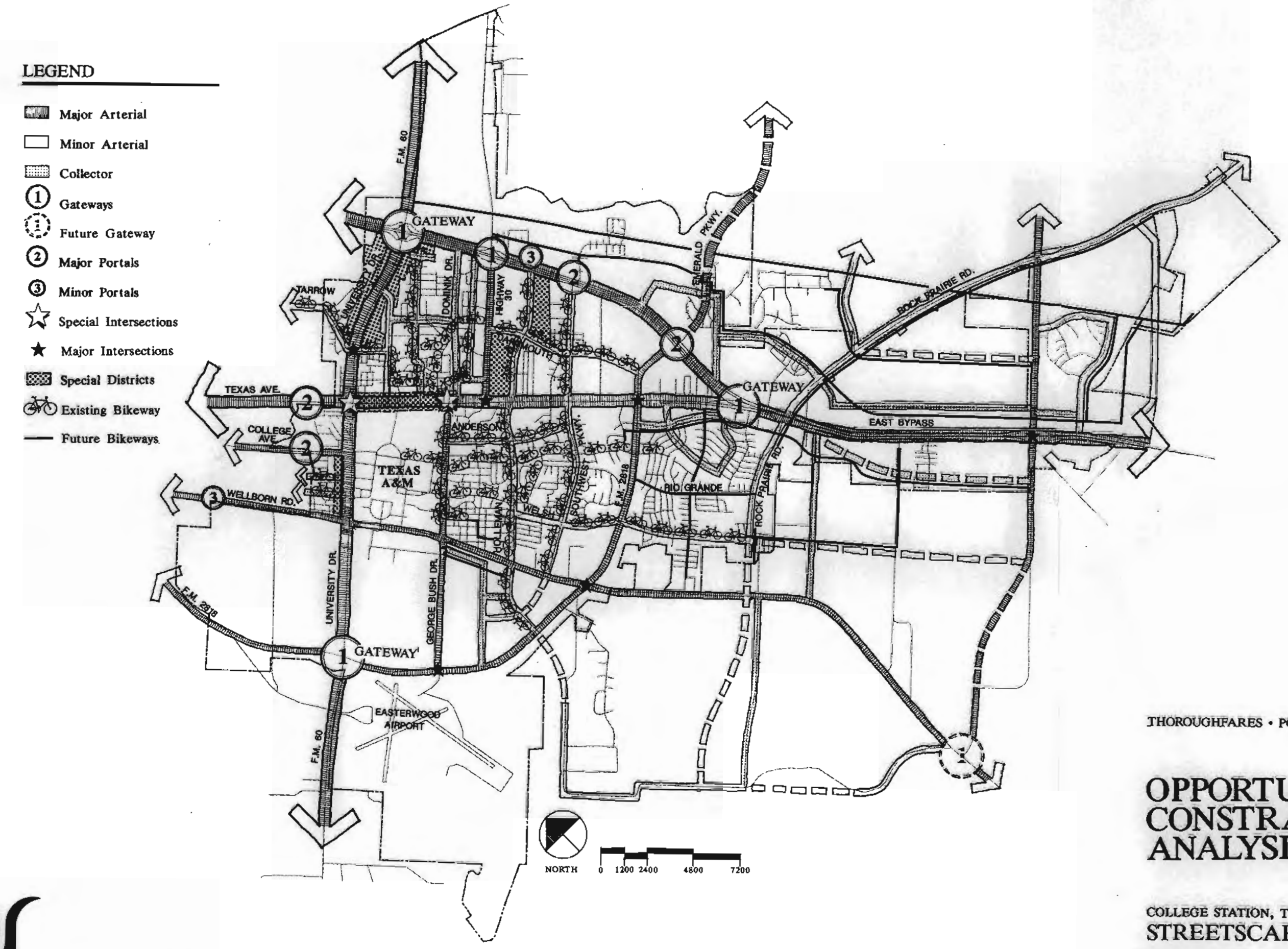


THOROUGHFARES • PORTALS • INTERSECTIONS

# OPPORTUNITIES/ CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS
STREETSCAPE PLAN

NEWMAN JACKSON BIEBERSTEIN, INC.

## Constraints

There are some very real constraints to the streetscape program that must be clearly documented and understood so that the plan can make as strong an impact as possible given these existing conditions.

*Existing Utilities*

Existing utilities from overhead power and phone lines to underground gas, water and sewer lace the rights-of-way and present potential conflicts to tree plantings and other related streetscape development.

*Rights-of-Way*

As **Exhibit Eight** indicates, the available R.O.W. for street tree planting is very limited along the major thoroughfares. Compounding this constraint is the existence of drainage channels with much of this right-of-way along Texas and University as well as the fact that many existing developments have built out to the right-of-way in these areas leaving limited room for any public sponsored development. This problem is particularly acute in the Northgate Commercial area.

*Existing Primary and Secondary Thoroughfares*

A major portion of the City street system is relatively new and, as a result, streetscape recommendations affecting roadway alignments, median placement, etc. should be kept to a minimum. Likewise, most major intersections are new or recently modified. Any streetscape guidelines affecting them should be long term in nature.